

Testimony before the CGA Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing on Proposed FY 23 Adjustments for Higher Ed Agencies
February 22, 2022
Submitted by Laurel K Kessler-Quinones

Thank you, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representatives Dathan and Nolan, and members of the Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to address you today.

My name is Laurel K Kessler-Quinones. I am a resident of Woodbury, CT.

I currently work at Capital Community College as an Adjunct Instructor. Before my position as an adjunct instructor, I was the Director of Education Technology at Housatonic Community College for over ten years. From both an instructor's perspective and an administrative perspective, I am aware of our Community Colleges' impact on our students and the surrounding communities.

I am writing to communicate my support for assuring our community college system is sufficiently funded, providing us with the necessary means to uphold and service our students and communities. The Board of Regents' request for additional funding for our community college system is critical for the students and our community and the future of our state and the next generation. Increased funding is essential to safeguard the high-quality educational services of our students and communities. Services have declined due to lack of staffing and insufficient funding. Our students suffer from a decrease in support services.

In the recent Board of Regents Finance Meeting, the BOR Finance Committee proposed a 5% tuition increase for students. I cannot agree with our community college system increasing tuition on our students. So many of our students are already struggling to balance their school, work, and family demands. Rising tuition continues to shift the burden of education to those in our communities with the least resources.

The Board of Regents for Higher Education threatens to lay off student-facing community college employees. It is reprehensible, particularly given that the Board of Regents and CSCU managers have hired dozens of managers over the past three years – Regional Presidents, Vice Presidents, Associate Vice Presidents – costing millions of dollars. These management positions are entirely redundant, wasteful, and siphoning resources away from community college campuses.

Our public higher education system requires more resources to accomplish our mission of furnishing pathways to higher education, gainful employment, and life-changing knowledge and skills to the inhabitants of CT. Thank you for all your efforts to support this.

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